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What Does the Bible Say about Giving or Accepting a Bribe?

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Fraud, corruption, and bribery are probably among the most prevalent issues to alert Christians to, not just those appointed in the marketplace, but all of us who face the today's complexity of life and the deceptive action of the enemy. It would not be surprising to say that many people, even Christians, end up falling into the trap of the enemy because of these three deceptive phenomena.

Given that the Bible often uses bribery to refer to these three phenomena, it may seem difficult to find a common definition of bribery, but the word generally refers to giving money or favors to someone who is in a position of trust, to pervert their judgment or corrupt their conduct. For believers, we know that the true definition comes from our Helper and Counselor, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us. By Him we know we should go right when the world says we should go left.

It is very important to emphasize that our holy God strictly forbids bribery, as the Bible clearly says that giving or receiving a bribe is evil: "*You must not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and corrupts the words[a] of the righteous*." (Exodus 23:8). This law is also repeated in Deuteronomy 16:19 where God our Lord says: *"Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous."* The teaching of the New Testament corresponds to this in the solemn command: *"I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of favoritism*." (1 Tim 5:21).

Many Bible passages condemn fraud, bribery, and corruption, to name a few: Exodus 20:15-16; Leviticus 19:35-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Proverbs 20:10; James 5:4; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ezekiel 45:9-10; Job 15:34. The negative effects of bribery are clearly described as obscuring truth and perverting justice. Bribery blinds the influence on wisdom and discernment and distorts the words of those who would be righteous in the sight of God. It must be understood that neither the one who gives nor the one who receives a bribe cares about truth or justice. Because of the condemnation on bribery, those who participate in it are also condemned (Psalm 26:9-10; Job 15:34).

The Bible condemns greed, including ungratefulness, love of money and of self (Luke 12:15; 2 Timothy 3:1-5), which are the primary motive in bribery. Bribery is one of the hallmarks of a corrupt society because where people give and receive bribes, it causes evil in the society. However, as the apostle Paul exhorts Thimothy in the above passage, these sins are more prevalent in today's end-time corrupt society. In today's pressure situations, with the advanced malicious methods of the enemy, there are many incentives for bribery. It is very easy to give in if Christians are not ready to respond with the word of their testimony.

In today's corrupt society and as we approach rapture, the entrenchment of bribery continues to grow. It would not be surprising if many [at least self-portrayed] Christians mistakenly believe that they commit no sin when involved in corruption. This normalization of the abnormal is the result of the dethroning of the Holy Spirit. It is currently more difficult to believe that one can obtain a job, a promotion or service, without paying any form of bribe. This point of view is shared not only by unbelievers but also by believers. The apostle John prophesied that without the mark of the beast, the deceiving spirit of the Antichrist, no one could buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-17). We sit in prophecy today. Fortunately, anyone who wishes to share in the victory of the Lamb will stand firm by His side amidst hardship and disacceptance until the last day.

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Edward (8 months ago)

Self interests amidst a competitive environment of who is better thsn the other at all times and in all life spheres, is the foundation of corruptio plus bribery. Now in Africa it has been channelled through political interests of family heredity and succession trends in leadership, hence the need to function fully on corruption and briberies to enjoy influence and consolidate power of dictatorship forever. Coups today are a direct response to corruption and bribery profoundly poverty enriching the majority populations of youthful generation's. Thanks Dr. Sixbert for alerting us.

Prince I. Freely (8 months ago)

Very educative and inspiring. Thanks Prof. May God energize you more. Amen.